

# Braille Monitor



MAY, 1976

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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# THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND—IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES.

## THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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\* \* \*

If you or a friend wishes to remember the National Federation of the Blind in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

"I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation, the sum of \$\_\_\_ (or, "\_\_\_percent of my net estate", or "the following stocks and bonds: \_\_\_") to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons."

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

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## LOS ANGELES: SITE OF THE 1976 CONVENTION

BY

SHARON GOLD AND SHERRILL PICKERING

Los Angeles is the largest city in the State of California and the second largest city in the United States. It is a city of intermingled communities each with its own personality. Los Angeles is known for its citrus fruit industry; motion picture, radio, and television business; oil production; and general industry. Los Angeles' importance to Federationists is that in the heart of its 404 square miles lies the Los Angeles Convention Center and the Biltmore Hotel—the site of the 1976 Convention of the National Federation of the Blind.

The Biltmore Hotel, located at 515 South Olive Street, stands on the southwest corner of Fifth and Olive Streets, across from Pershing Square—an underground parking area with a city park above it. Upon entering the hotel from the Olive Street entrance, one finds himself in the midst of a massive lobby. Within this lobby one immediately sees two staircases. One is located on each side of the back wall of the lobby. These stairs lead to a balcony overlooking the lobby. Between the two staircases is the opening to the elevator alcove where six elevators line the walls, three on the left and three on the right. Public and house telephones are located on the back wall.

Immediately to the left of the Olive Street door is the bell captain's desk. An entrance to the hotel liquor store, which has irregular hours, is located behind the bell captain's desk on the left wall. Farther along the left wall of the lobby, past the bell captain's desk, is a gift shop with

cards, magazines, newspapers, cigarettes, et cetera. Just beyond the gift shop is a long desk belonging to the room clerks. About midway on this left wall are the cashiers' cages, of which there are four. Of importance at checkout time is the fact that the cashier's cage on the extreme left, when facing the cages, is for credit cards only. Beyond the cashiers' cages is an opening to the left which leads downstairs to the Empire Room, the hotel's dining room.

Returning to the Olive Street door and going to the right, one finds the Grey Line Sightseeing Bus Company's desk. Beyond the bus desk on the right wall is the opening to the office of National Airlines. Farther into the lobby on this wall is a jewelry shop. The last entrance off of the right side of the lobby leads downstairs to the Castilian Lounge, decorated with a replica of a pirate ship. By going straight through the Castilian Lounge one enters directly into the Ranchero Coffee Shop at the point where the hostess and the cashier's desk are located. This coffee shop can also be reached from an Olive Street entrance which is the second door from Fifth Street.

The Promenade Level of the Biltmore Hotel will be the scene of Convention activities not located at the Convention Center. This floor is marked on the elevator by the letter "G" and can be entered from Fifth Street, Grand Avenue, or by coming up the two staircases located on the wall opposite the Olive Street door, or by using the elevator. Leaving the elevator area on

the Promenade Level, one steps down several stairs to find a long hall with another hall crossing at right angles. Upon turning to the left into the crosshall, one finds the Crystal Ballroom on the left, followed by the Colonnade Room. The Crystal Ballroom will be used for the Convention Hospitality Room while the Colonnade Room will be the site of Registration. Farther down this hallway is another hallway going off to the right. By turning right and entering this new hallway, one finds on the left the entrance to the Biltmore Bowl, the location of the Executive Committee meeting.

Returning to the elevator area as a point of reference, if one crosses the crosshall (after stepping down the steps from the elevators) and proceeds straight down the long hall, the Galeria Room is the first room on the left. This room will be used for Convention exhibits. The Music Room, the location of the daily devotionals, is on the right after the crosshall. Farther down the hall on the left is an opening which leads to a flight of stairs and a group of conference rooms. The conference rooms will be used for committee meetings and the Monday afternoon Division meetings. At the end of this hall is the Grand Avenue exit which is the loading and unloading point of the Airport Transit buses and the Convention buses.

Again returning to the Promenade Level elevator area, step down the stairs and turn to the right into the crosshall. Immediately after turning is the entrance to the men's restroom on the right. On the left is a second entrance to the Music Room, since it is located on the corner. The ladies' powder room follows on the left. The hotel beauty salon is just beyond the powder room, again on the left. At the end of the hallway is the Fifth Street exit.

The National President will occupy the Imperial Suite, located on the eleventh floor. The California host affiliate suite will be located in the tenth floor rooms 10333 and 10334. Everyone is cordially invited to come to the California Suite for a visit or to ask questions of the Californians who will be present to help out-of-state delegates.

The Los Angeles Convention Center will be the meeting place of the general sessions and the Banquet of the 1976 Convention of the National Federation of the Blind. This new facility, owned and operated by the City of Los Angeles, can house a convention of 15,000 people or serve a sit-down banquet to 8,000 persons. We will be using Petree Hall, a secondary hall, located on the right side of the lobby of this absolutely huge building.

One enters the Convention Center lobby, a massive room with floor-to-ceiling bronze mirrors. A large Venetian glass light sculpture is suspended from the ceiling. In the center of the room is a staircase leading to the Mezzanine. This staircase has escalators in the center and standard stairs on each side. To enter Petree Hall, remain on the right side of the lobby and proceed to the back. Turn into the hallway going off to the right. There are two sets of doors entering Petree Hall on the right side of this hallway. Restrooms are on the left side of the hallway with the men's room being the one closest to the lobby.

A cocktail lounge, dining room, and cafeteria are located within the Convention Center structure. These facilities are located down the hall which goes off to the left at the back of the lobby and can be easily reached from Petree Hall by turning left in the hallway outside of Petree Hall, going



straight across the back of the lobby and continuing straight down the left hall. The dining room is the first room on the left side of the hall, followed by the large cafeteria. Restrooms are on the right side of the hall, again with the men's room closest to the lobby.

### Travel To and From the Convention Center

Shuttle buses will be provided to travel from the Convention hotels to the Convention Center. The buses will leave from the Grand Avenue exit (on the Promenade Level) of the Biltmore Hotel and return there.

The buses will unload at the Convention Center at the regular bus unloading area. To get into the Center from this area, go up the ramp from the bus. At the top of the ramp, turn to the right and follow the wall, which is on the right. Eventually the wall will stop, but continue in the same direction to the building which is not much farther ahead. At the building, turn left. Follow the building to the opening. Turn right; this will lead directly to the doors opening into the large lobby of the Convention Center.

If you choose to have a good brisk morning or evening exercise, you may walk to or from the Biltmore Hotel. To do so, leave the hotel by way of the Olive Street entrance. Turn right on Olive Street and go south. Cross Sixth Street, a one-way street to the east or left; Seventh Street, a two-way street; Eighth Street, a one-way street to the west; Ninth Street, a one-way street to the east; and Olympic Boulevard, a two-way street. Continue south on Olive Street crossing Eleventh Street, a one-way street to the west, and Twelfth Street, a one-way street to the east. After crossing Twelfth Street, turn to the right. Going west on

Twelfth Street, cross Grand Avenue. Hope, Flower, and Figueroa (a very wide street with a button to push on the lightpost to lengthen the crossing time). After crossing Figueroa Street, Twelfth Street becomes Nagoya Street. Continue going west on Nagoya Street. After passing a mailbox on the street edge of the sidewalk, Nagoya Street will begin to angle to the right, toward the bus unloading area. Do not angle with the street; instead continue going straight to a short flight of stairs. Go up the stairs. At this point, the top of the bus unloading ramp will be on the right. Follow the wall on the right to the building using instructions given for bus passengers.

### Restaurant Ideas

Both the Biltmore Hotel and the Mayflower Hotel have restaurant facilities. The Biltmore Hotel has the Ranchero Coffee Shop, open from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. This is a deluxe coffee shop located the second door from the corner of Fifth Street on Olive Street, within the hotel building. The coffee shop serves continental and full breakfast meals for three dollars; sandwiches for two to three dollars; and full dinners for under four dollars. In addition, this coffee shop serves cocktails and wine. The Biltmore also has a full dining room, the Empire Room (located off the lobby to the left), serving both lunch and dinner (\$6.50 to \$10), and a cocktail lounge with dining room, the Lancer's Inn, entered from the Promenade Level.

Straight back from the front door of the Mayflower Hotel is a coffee shop open twenty-four hours a day with average-priced meals. A cocktail lounge is located just inside the front door to the left.

On the northwest corner of Fifth and Olive Streets is Googies, a twenty-four-hour coffee shop of medium price.

The Los Angeles Convention Center has a dining room which serves a buffet for approximately \$3.50 and a cafeteria which serves full hot meals for about \$2. The hours of these services will depend on our Convention sessions.

In addition to the above-mentioned restaurants, a Braille copy of *Los Angeles: Selected Restaurants and Night Clubs—Downtown* will be available to the president of each State affiliate or his representative to assist delegates in the selection of the finer restaurants in the Los Angeles area.

### Things To Do and Places To See

The Los Angeles area has many places to go and things to do, both amusing and educational. Many tours, for example the one to Universal Studios, are available through the Grey Line Sightseeing Bus Company which has a concession just inside the front door of the Biltmore Hotel to the right.

Within the near proximity of the Convention, one can visit Exposition Park, which includes the California Museum of Science and Industry; the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, site of the 1932 Olympic Games; and the National History Museum of Los Angeles County, which includes habitants of Africa and North America, as well as displays of California and western history. These exhibits are open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The well-known Farmers Market, at Third Street and Fairfax Avenue, is a shopping center not only for food, but for

clothing and gifts as well. In addition, the Farmers Market has areas for outdoor dining. It is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., except Sundays.

Griffith Park contains many attractions. It is located on the south slope of Mount Hollywood at Los Selas Boulevard and Riverside Drive. The Greek Theater is a scene of summer drama, concerts, and ballet. There is an observatory and planetarium; a hall of science; Travel Town, a museum of travel artifacts including a working railroad built on a 1:5 scale; and the Los Angeles Zoo with its Children's Zoo which has many animals available for close inspection.

At Hancock Park are the famous Rancho La Brea Tar Pits, considered to be one of the richest sources of specimens from the Ice Age. The pits are open Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with tours Wednesday through Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Also in Hancock Park is the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The museum is surrounded by a sculpture garden and is open daily except Monday. Hancock Park is at Wilshire Boulevard and Sixth Street.

Only about five blocks from the Biltmore Hotel is the Los Angeles Music Center. Various activities take place at the Center including drama, musical comedy, and symphony concerts. The Music Center also offers guided tours of their facilities. Several restaurants are nearby.

Olivera Street is located at the El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Park. This street is the oldest street in the City of Los Angeles and has been restored to its original appearance. There are sidewalk shops, stalls which sell Mexican art and handicrafts, and restaurants which offer Mexican-style foods.

Chinatown is located at 900 North Broadway. The Chinese call their street "Gin Ling Way," which means "street of the golden palace." This street is lined with Chinese shops and restaurants and frequently Chinese festivals and processions can be seen.

Outside of the downtown Los Angeles area are many places of great interest to most tourists, available by public transit and tour buses. Probably the most famous of these is Disneyland, which is considered to be the most elaborate tourist attraction ever built. It is open daily during the summer from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.

Hollywood is the home of the motion-picture industry, radio, and television. Tours are available to the television studios and to Universal Studios, the world's largest movie studio. The Hollywood Bowl, a natural amphitheater in the foothills, offers concerts by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday nights.

In Buena Park is Knott's Berry Farm, with its famous restaurants, fifty-two shops, western ghost town, historical exhibits, and amusement rides. The Berry Farm is open daily until midnight. Also in Buena Park is the Movieland Wax Museum and the Palace of Living Art.

Farther away from the city, one can visit Marineland at Rancho Palos Verdes on the Pacific Ocean, Lion Country Safari in Irvine, the *Queen Mary* in Long Beach, and Busch Gardens in Van Nuys, just to name a few.

### **Transportation Hints to the Convention Hotels**

Access to the Convention hotels is readily available by all means of transportation. If

traveling by car, take the Harbor Freeway (U.S. 11), which can be approached from the major freeways in the area, toward downtown Los Angeles. Take the Sixth Street off-ramp and head east into the downtown area. Since this is an area of one-way streets going east and west, it will be necessary to go one block beyond the street of each hotel in order to drive up in front of the hotel. Therefore, go to Olive Street if going to the Mayflower, and on to Hill Street if going to the Biltmore. Turn left, go one block to Fifth Street. Turn left and return west to Olive Street for the Biltmore Hotel or Grand Avenue for the Mayflower. Turn left onto these streets. The Biltmore is at the southwest corner of the intersection of Fifth and Olive Streets, while the Mayflower is located on the west side of Grand Avenue in the middle of the block between Fifth and Sixth Streets. Storage parking is available in nearby garages (\$3.50 to \$4.50 per day).

The Airport Transit System offers bus service from the Los Angeles International Airport to the Convention hotels (fare \$1.70). This bus leaves the airport every thirty minutes and stops outside each terminal's baggage pickup area. The Airport Transit bus stops at the Grand Avenue entrance to the Biltmore, which is across the street from the Mayflower Hotel. To get into the Biltmore Hotel from this bus stop, enter the building (this is the Promenade Level). Go down the long hall which includes going up a slight ramp, cross the crosshall, and go up a couple of steps to the elevator area. To go to the Mayflower Hotel, go down the sidewalk in the direction of the back of the bus to the crosswalk which is in the middle of the block. Cross the street to the right and you will go directly into the Mayflower.

Taxis are available from local bus depots. They stop in front of each hotel with entrances immediately into the lobbies.

If you choose to come to the Los Angeles area in a recreational vehicle, storage parking is available in an outside parking area at

the Convention Center (the fee is five dollars per day). Garages near the hotel cannot accommodate recreational vehicles and there are no parking areas in which the facilities of these vehicles may be used.

See you in Los Angeles in July!

□

## DOOR PRIZES

*Door prizes, door prizes—Oh, what fun.  
So, try to have something for everyone.  
We're not asking for special inventions.  
We have to make this our best Convention.  
Send yours to Tony and do it today.  
The Convention is just a few months away.  
If bringing them with you is on your mind,  
Ask for the McGeorges—they'll be  
somewhere in line.*

*We know that this is crazy verse,  
But we like to think it could be worse.*

*Please donate something and be spared  
the shame  
Of expecting a prize and never hearing  
your name.  
Have to go now so will say goodbye,  
But will greet you all in L.A. in July.*

Diane McGeorge reminds us that it is time to hurry the prizes along to: Anthony Mannino, National Federation of the Blind of California, 730 South Western Avenue, Suite 201, Los Angeles, California 90005. □

## BRADEMAs SETS THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Ever since Representative John Brademas (Indiana) inserted a statement regarding NAC into the July 16, 1975 *Congressional Record*, NAC and its supporters have loudly and widely proclaimed that the Hoosier Congressman's words constitute a public declaration of support for NAC.

James Gashel of our Washington Office subsequently looked into the matter, and was told by the Congressman's staff that the circumstances under which the statement was printed and distributed were somewhat "strange." It was explained to the NFB that the body of the statement was written by NAC and that it received only

perfunctory examination by Brademas before being introduced into the *Congressional Record* as a mere courtesy gesture. Nevertheless, NAC seized upon the statement and placed it in its meager arsenal of weapons. That this was detrimental to the blind is demonstrated by a statement in connection with the recent U.S. Office of Education decision to reapprove NAC as an accrediting agency. The reply to a U.S. Senator demanding to know why NAC was reapproved mentioned Brademas' report "commending" NAC. In a letter last December to NAC-accredited agencies, sponsors, and supporters, the then NAC President Dan Robinson said that Brademas has

"decided, in this way, to publicly recognize NAC's effectiveness as a responsible standard-setting and accrediting body." However, contrast that with the recent statement by Brademas: "I am troubled to learn that my insertion of a report of NAC's programs has been construed as singling out for recognition of NAC's accreditation process." Furthermore, the Congressman's staff had indicated that the statement was circulated widely by NAC without the knowledge or consent of the Congressman or his staff.

But an attempt has now been made by Brademas to set the record straight:

*December 30, 1975.*

Mr. JONATHAN MAY,  
*National Federation of the Blind,  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina.*

DEAR MR. MAY: Thank you for your letter regarding my statement in the *Congressional Record* about the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC). I am troubled to learn that my insertion of a report of NAC's programs has been construed as singling out for recognition of NAC's accreditation process. Rather, I intended my statement and the report of

NAC's work to be included in the *Congressional Record* as information for those interested in standards for agencies that serve visually handicapped people.

I appreciate the time you have taken to explain your views to me on this subject. I want to reassure you that, as a United States Congressman, I will continue to work, as I have in the past, to improve opportunities of all handicapped citizens to enjoy full and independent lives.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

JOHN BRADEMAS,  
*Chairman, Select Subcommittee  
on Education.*

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Now that Congressman Brademas has spoken out against the unauthorized use and interpretation by NAC of the statement inserted in the *Congressional Record* over his name, one has to wonder how NAC will try to explain it and what the next maneuver will be. "Oh what a tangled web we weave, When first we practice to deceive." Here's to you, NAC—and to your so-called "professionalism." Cheers. □

## NAC ATTEMPTS NCSAB TAKE-OVER

As NAC's battle for survival becomes more desperate, it reaches deeper—and lower—into its bag of dirty tricks. NAC's latest chunk of chicanery (its chicanery no longer comes in bits and pieces) was perpetrated against the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB). But this latest attempt to thwart the true interests of the blind consumer, like past attempts, is doomed to failure.

This recent revelation of NAC's true character, or lack of it, came February 8 and 9, 1976, at the Washington, D.C., meeting of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). Still smarting from the NCSAB's vote last September in San Francisco to withhold NAC dues pending suggested reforms, NAC attempted illegally and unethically what it has not been able to accomplish otherwise.

With many NCSAB members in attendance at the CSAVR meeting, NAC instigated and organized a "rump" meeting (an anatomically fitting term) of the minority of blind agency directors who are NAC supporters. This was done without the knowledge of the NCSAB's principal officers, who were readily available at the CSAVR meeting, and without any prior authorization from the officers or board of directors to hold any meeting.

The president of NCSAB and Director of the Oregon Commission for the Blind, Robert Pogorelc, on whose authority a meeting can be called, reported that he first learned of the unauthorized gathering from "a general agency director, who indicated that he had sat in briefly on a meeting of

'blind directors,' and that they 'took some action.'" Further verification came from a Federal official who had attended the session and from Burt Risley, the Director of the Texas Commission for the Blind and NCSAB's treasurer.

The "rump" group attempted to justify the calling of this most unusual NCSAB meeting by claiming that a January 30 memo from NCSAB President Pogorelc regarding the setting of the next NCSAB meeting was unclear. (The reader can judge the clarity of the memo later in this article.) This alibi by the pro-NAC bloc is reflected in the following verbatim excerpt from the minutes of the February 8 "rump" meeting (Merv Flander, a strong NAC supporter, is head of the Nevada State agency for the blind; James Carballo, another strong NAC supporter, is director of the Mississippi agency; William Coppage, head of the Virginia agency, is a member of the NAC Board of Directors; and Lou Rives, director of the Arkansas agency, is the president of NAC):

### NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE AGENCIES FOR THE BLIND

#### SPRING MEETING

*Washington, D.C., February 8, 1976.*

The meeting was called to order at 2:25 p.m.

Mr. JIM CARBALLO: Indicates that he is the only NCSAB Board of Directors member present, that the other officers and board members are absent, and that there

may be some question as to whether the assemblage present constitutes an official meeting of the NCSAB membership. He calls for suggestions or comments.

#### DISCUSSION

Mr. M. FLANDER: Indicated that he did not interpret the letter dated January 30, 1976, from Mr. Pogorelc to mean that this meeting was cancelled. He assumed after reading said letter that today's meeting was still scheduled to be held. He suggests that Mr. Joe Owen and Mr. Owen Pollard be contacted to determine if they had been notified by Mr. Pogorelc that today's meeting was cancelled.

Mr. CARBALLO: Requests that we review a copy of the minutes of the last NCSAB meeting, held in San Francisco, to check any reference to the date and place of the next scheduled meeting. (Mr. Wayne McEachin from Georgia provides said copy.)

Mr. FLANDER: Moves that we vote to determine who thought today's meeting was still scheduled from reading the January 30, 1976, letter from Mr. Pogorelc, and who thought the meeting had been cancelled. Seconded by Mr. Rives. Motion passes, no opposition.

Mr. W. COPPAGE: Moves that today's meeting is the official, regularly scheduled NCSAB business meeting. Seconded by Mr. H. Magee and Mr. D. Wedewer. Motion passes unanimously, no abstentions, no opposition.

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Thus did the NAC supporters attempt to legitimize their "meeting." But a reading of the January 30 memo from Pogorelc can

only lead to two possible conclusions: that the NACsters were totally lacking in basic comprehension, or far more likely, that they were simply bent on doing their dirty deed.

The Pogorelc memo starts by noting the time and place of the CSAVR meetings (during which the "rump" sessions took place) and urges NCSAB members to attend. It mentions many of the items that will have to be on the agenda at the next NCSAB meeting. Then Pogorelc makes it plain that the next NCSAB meeting should *not* be held in conjunction with the CSAVR sessions:

"After much effort, it has been concluded that there is no possible way that all of the pending agenda items can be accommodated in a half-day or even a full-day meeting. Moreover, it would be virtually impossible to schedule meetings during the week of February 9 without detracting from the work of both the CSAVR and the NCSAB. It would therefore appear that our best alternative would be to have a separate meeting *subsequent to the CSAVR spring meeting.*" [Emphasis added.]

This easily establishes that Pogorelc did not want and did not call for an NCSAB meeting for the week of February 8. And the final paragraph proves that he *did* want to set up a meeting at a considerably later date:

"*Let's plan, therefore, on setting up this meeting somewhere in the central part of the United States for some weekend in the time period between March 19 and May 22.* [Emphasis in the original.] To accommodate the convenience and preferences of a majority of our membership, a survey form is enclosed. Please set out your preferences as to cities and dates for this next meeting

and also any suggestions as to agenda items or format. Please mail your response back to me by February 16. I will then be in touch with the executive board, meeting arrangements will be established, and notice will be sent out in time for everyone to plan accordingly."

It should be borne in mind that Pogorelc is the legally elected president of the NCSAB and that he acted within his authority (and according to traditional NCSAB procedures) with respect to the issuance of this memo calling for a meeting not to be held in connection with the CSAVR meeting in Washington in February.

Can anyone now believe that Messrs. Rives, Coppage, Carballo, et al. called their devious meeting because of a purely innocent misunderstanding?

But the crowning evidence of NAC's indecent self-exposure came in a report from a general agency director "that [NAC Executive Director] Dick Bleecker was very much involved in the discussion, and that Bleecker suggested ways in which the bylaws could or should be changed."

What nerve! If NAC lacks ethics and morals, it cannot be said that it lacks gall! Even those in attendance at this "rump" session must have been a bit uneasy about public knowledge of Bleecker's intrusion, since the subsequent minutes of these meetings made no mention whatever of him. (The minutes did note the presence of Irving Schloss of the American Foundation for the Blind, the agency that serves as NAC's financial patron saint and godfather.)

What an example of "professionalism," for which NAC has so long and loudly yearned during these past ten years! What

a lesson in ethics: If you are rebuked by an organization whose support you seek, simply foment an illegal clandestine meeting to reverse that rebuke. But more than being unprofessional, illegal, and unethical, the actions of NAC and its supporters were thoroughly hypocritical in view of their unjustified complaints about the attendance of NFB President Kenneth Jernigan at the September 1975 NCSAB meeting, complaints made totally ludicrous because he is the director of a state agency serving the blind.

What did NAC and its cronies hope to gain by such a travesty? The group, spearheaded by NAC President Lou Rives, voted to resume NCSAB's moral and financial support of NAC and passed several amendments to the organization's bylaws. One of the amendments transferred from the NCSAB Board to the general membership the power to fill vacant offices. It is no coincidence that the group later declared the office of president-elect to be vacant, and filled it with NAC-supporter Carballo.

An interesting sidelight occurred near the outset of the February 8 "rump" session. It stemmed from a prior statement by the attorneys for the blind vending-facility operators who have filed suit against the Cleveland Society for the Blind. The attorneys had indicated to opposing counsel that they were considering asking Charles Hoehne, the NCSAB's legal counsel, to testify in the long-standing suit. The attorneys for the NAC-accredited Cleveland Society seemed shocked to learn that Mr. Hoehne would testify on behalf of blind workers instead of supporting the "professionals," and evidently passed the news along to NAC officials. NAC President Rives presumptuously came to the conclu-



sion "that Mr. Hoehne's testifying in the Cleveland Society's litigation may have conflicted with today's meeting." The request, however, had not gone to Mr. Hoehne, so that in fact, he was not testifying in the lawsuit, and was not even in Cleveland at the time. Furthermore, it has been reported to the NFB that Hoehne may demand a retraction of that statement by the NAC president.

Rives followed up with two more attempts at mischief. He moved that an NCSAB business meeting be held in September 1976 (contrary to the prior statements of NCSAB President Pogorelc) and that any NCSAB Board meeting held prior

to September 1976 be considered unrepresentative and unofficial.

While NAC and its allies may temporarily be enjoying the delusion that their machinations have succeeded, they should soon find out otherwise. The NCSAB president, Pogorelc, and legal counsel, Hoehne, have already stated their opinions that the February meetings were illegal. Furthermore, another NCSAB officer said, "The only way NAC will get money from us is to pass the hat."

If NAC has gained any short-range advantage (and that is doubtful), it will surely be the big loser in the long run, for it has once again shown its true character to the NCSAB and the blind of this Nation. □

#### PROTEST HEW RECOGNITION OF NAC

A storm of protest by Federationists, Congressmen, and others has greeted the decision of the U.S. Commissioner of Education to continue for another four years HEW's recognition of NAC as an accrediting body for schools serving the blind and visually handicapped. That a self-serving and harmful body such as NAC can be approved by the Office of Education is incredible in itself, but it is even more so when it is done after supposedly careful consideration of the evidence. One can only conclude that this is further proof of the adage that "there are none so blind as those who will not see."

The evidence of NAC's sorry record in the field of accreditation of schools for the blind and visually handicapped is there for all to see, and was clearly and plainly presented by the NFB before the Office of Education's Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility

(AIE) in Washington, D.C., on December 4, 1975. [The NFB's views were published in full in the February 1976 *Braille Monitor*.] Yet, John Proffitt and his AIE staff either failed to understand this evidence, or deliberately disregarded it. In either case the AIE staff and the U.S. Office of Education have brought discredit upon themselves, but more importantly, the blind of this Nation are the losers.

The first intimation that the deck was stacked in favor of NAC came even before the hearing began. According to the original and agreed-to schedule, the NAC representatives were to appear first, followed by the presentation of NFB Washington representative James Gashel. Apparently fearing that Gashel's appearance after NAC would give NFB the advantage, NAC persuaded Proffitt to reverse the order. But a strong protest by Gashel thwarted this attempted collusion, and the original schedule was adhered

to. A second indication of the prevailing sentiment came when the AIE invited NAC to attend a preliminary subcommittee meeting on the day before the hearings, without notifying the NFB.

The presentation by NAC President Lou Rives and Executive Director Richard Bleecker was most noteworthy for its heated animosity against the NFB and a personal attack on Gashel, a tactic which did not sit well with the AIE Advisory Committee. By contrast, our Washington representative followed with a cool and well-reasoned presentation which analyzed the objectivity of the AIE staff, the lack of a substantial reason for NAC to be placed on the Commissioner's approved list of accrediting bodies in the first place, and the nine areas where NAC fails to meet the criteria for recognized accrediting organizations.

This had its effect on the AIE Advisory Committee, because it followed up with searching questions of Bleecker and Rives concerning NAC's inadequacies. The best the NACsters could do was to blame these inadequacies on a lack of funding.

But a further clue to the future came on the following day when the AIE Advisory Committee went into a closed session. In response to a subsequent inquiry by Congressman Stephen Neal of North Carolina, AIE staff director Proffitt could only justify these secret deliberations by replying that "matters pertaining to the financial status of NAC and allegations made by the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) regarding the personal integrity of members of the Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility Staff were being discussed." At best, a lame justification for continuing secrecy-in-government.

Having heard the facts, the AIE Advisory Committee chose to ignore most of them, and recommended to U.S. Commissioner of Education Terrell Bell that the recognition of NAC as an accrediting body be continued for four more years.

But the NFB's presentation must have made a small dent in the Advisory Committee's bias, because NAC did not escape completely unscathed. In its recommendations the Committee "expressed concerns over the [National Accreditation] Council's compliance with criteria" involving the "opportunity to comment" and the "reflection of community of interests." Presumably these will be further explained when, as rumor has it, the Office of Education releases a verbatim transcript of the Advisory Committee hearings (with suitable deletions, of course, of what transpired in the December 5 secret deliberations). The Committee requested that NAC report back in a year on its implementation of the two criteria.

The Committee also acknowledged the NFB statement concerning NAC's financial condition. The Committee expressed "concerns over the financial stability of the Council, since its financial base differs from that ordinarily associated with the recognized accrediting agencies." One of the major understatements of the year. (NAC receives more than half its funding from the American Foundation for the Blind.) The Committee therefore asked NAC to submit annual audited financial reports.

But what of the other legitimate concerns evidenced in the NFB's bill-of-particulars? What of the lack of public and consumer representation on NAC's accreditation teams, or NAC's steadfast refusal to disclose the agencies or schools which have been

denied accreditation, or NAC's failure to provide sufficient advance notice of proposed or revised standards, or NAC's inadequate procedures for dealing with complaints against accredited agencies (as in the Kettner case), or its failure to review its outmoded standards, or the lack of general acceptance of its policies and evaluation methods, or—most obvious of all—its total subservience to the AFB.

The Advisory Committee, its staff, and the U.S. Commissioner of Education simply chose to ignore the facts, or wouldn't or couldn't understand them. This is evidenced by the ludicrous statements made in response to the increasing number of inquiries and protests by Federationists and Congressmen since the Office of Education decision was announced.

In a letter to one Federationist, Commissioner Bell betrays his insensitivity to the issue by stating:

"While it [NAC] receives a substantial portion of its operating budget from government and private grants, there is no evidence that the contributors have any means of exerting any special influence on NAC. For example the American Foundation for the Blind is a *nonvoting* sponsor of NAC."

Does Bell really believe that AFB's financing of more than fifty percent of NAC's budget carries no influence with NAC? But he continues in the same letter that "Our review of NAC has indicated that it is financially solvent at the present time." Apparently Bell chooses to ignore the fact that NAC has operated at a deficit during the past two years, and has—by its own admission—had to delay and curtail programs and activities because of a lack of funding. If being "financially solvent"

simply means not being hailed into bankruptcy court, then by that dubious standard NAC is "financially solvent."

But the Commissioner is really in his element in Never-Never Land when he states that: "NAC has demonstrated that it does have a wide base of acceptance . . . that it has the acceptance and support of educators, practitioners, and employers. The American Library Association has officially adopted NAC's standards for library services."

Never mind that NAC has been rebuked and rebuffed by the Library of Congress' Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, the Southern Conference of Librarians for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, HEW's Rehabilitation Services Administration, and a number of other state and private agencies. Never mind that NAC has labored mightily for ten years and has managed to accredit fewer than sixty of the nearly five hundred agencies serving the blind. Never mind the facts; they would only confuse Dr. Bell.

But Federationists and our supporters in Congress are determined that Bell and his cohorts in the Federal establishment receive and understand the message. An increasing number of letters have gone to the Office of Education since its pro-NAC decision. Not untypical is this forceful communication from Congressman Charles Grassley of Iowa:

*January 21, 1976.*

Dr. TERRELL BELL,  
*Commissioner of Education,*  
*Washington, D.C.*

DEAR DR. BELL: I am writing at this time to advise you of my opposition to

continued recognition of the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC) as one of the specialized accrediting bodies approved by the Office of Education. The distinction of approval by the Commissioner should not be conferred lightly, and it must be earned by those accrediting bodies which seek it. I do not believe that NAC merits recognition a second time.

I have recently reviewed NAC's record of responsiveness, and candidly, I believe there are serious deficiencies in the extent to which it involves blind persons through their organization in the accreditation operations and policy-making activities.

I am particularly concerned that NAC has been controlled by certain of the professional workers for the blind to the exclusion of the blind themselves. It is my understanding that more than fifty percent of NAC's current funding is derived from one single source—the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB). This financial arrangement would seem to place NAC in substantial violation of your criteria which require that recognized accrediting bodies must function autonomously.

This and other critical issues must be taken seriously as you review your recognition of NAC. In my judgment, a strong case has been made for revoking such recognition. I do not believe that the integrity of the accreditation system in this country is well served if the Office of Education approves an accreditation body which is itself discredited in the eyes of the very people it purports to assist.

Since many of my constituents are concerned with your position, I would appreciate your keeping me informed of the status

of this matter and giving me a report at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,  
*Member of Congress.*

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Whether it is possible to educate the Office of Education and overcome its bias in favor of NAC is debatable. Although the final decision to grant continued Office of Education recognition to NAC as an accrediting body was made by Commissioner Bell, it is obvious by his statements that he learned only what his AIE staff and Advisory Committee wanted him to know. Nor is it likely that Dr. Bell wants to know anything more, in the time-honored bureaucratic tradition of avoiding controversy at all costs.

Therefore the best hope lies in our local chapter members writing more letters to HEW Secretary Matthews asking for suspension of the NAC recognition pending a full and unbiased investigation, and urging U.S. Senators and Representatives to send similar messages to Matthews. These letters should stress that there is no justification for NAC accreditation of schools for the blind in the first place, since this function is already adequately carried out by the regional accrediting associations; that NAC does not comply with several of the Office of Education criteria for recognition; that the Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility staff and Advisory Committee have shown consistent bias in favor of NAC and against the blind consumer of services; and that the Advisory Committee came to a decision in a secret session, and in disregard of the evidence.

Letters should be sent to: Honorable F. David Matthews, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C. 20201.

Copies of the letters should be sent to your Senators and Congressmen, and to James Gashel, Suite 212, Dupont Circle

Building, 1346 Connecticut Avenue Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20036.

If we do our part we can win this battle to remove the U.S. Government's approval of an odious agency whose actions have continuously harmed the blind consumer. □

### AFB MAKES IT CLEAR

The American Foundation for the Blind has again put into words what has been plain all along: it "buys" NAC, lock, stock, and barrel. The front page article in the January 1976 *AFB Newsletter* proclaims: "AFB To Continue NAC Support in All Possible Ways."

However, AFB Executive Director Loyal Eugene Apple's statement that "We wish to clarify the Foundation's position concerning NAC because of many questions from blind persons and organizations in the field" indicates that the controversy over such support has reached even into this establishment citadel.

No matter that such a policy has proven harmful to the best interests of the blind of this Nation, AFB plans to move full steam ahead. "The Foundation has a moral and financial commitment to NAC. . . . It is our intention to continue—and to strengthen—that commitment in the next months and years," Apple declared. Federationists at the 1975 NFB Convention recall that the AFB director waffled at the question of continued support for NAC when it was put to him point-blank by President Jernigan. He ultimately refused to discuss the matter, claiming he needed more time to study it.

He has had that time, and his answer now should make it quite clear to any Doubting Thomases that AFB is the foremost financial backer and driving force behind NAC. This financial support amounts to \$153,000 in fiscal 1976, comprising well over half of NAC's total budget. The trend is rising, as support for NAC from other financial sources falls off. According to the Foundation, its grant in 1975 was \$113,000, while the support averaged about \$90,000 in previous years.

We shall see a continuation of that rising trend until NAC reforms itself or is put to rest—at best, a classic case of "throwing good money after bad."

Apart from outright financial subsidies, the *AFB Newsletter* boasts of other forms of large-scale assistance to NAC:

"Since 1962, the AFB's participation in accreditation has ranged from massive underwriting and staff involvement in the early years to the now ongoing activities of its regional consultants and specialists in encouraging agencies and schools to seek accreditation, in assisting them with the self-study, and in helping them implement NAC recommendations.

"AFB Board members have served on the NAC Board from time to time; at present two persons sit on both boards. AFB staff members have assisted NAC in various capacities occasionally and will continue to do so . . . ."

Thus the AFB itself has given the lie to the claim that "there is no evidence that the contributors have any means of exerting any special influence on NAC," an absurd claim made by the U.S. Commissioner of Education in attempting to justify continued Government recognition of NAC as an accrediting body. [See the previous article.]

The AFB spoke even more loudly and clearly a month after the publication of its newsletter when it formally proposed to a U.S. Senate subcommittee on February 20 that all agencies serving the blind be required to seek NAC accreditation. [See the April 1976 *Braille Monitor*.] It is easy to see from this, and from NAC's attacks on the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, and on state agencies and individuals, that the NAC-AFB axis will declare war on anyone who dares oppose it, regardless of the cost to the blind. As more state agencies realize this peril, a greater number are likely to join the organized blind in fighting this unholy alliance. □

#### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS TURNS DOWN NAC

The Library of Congress has joined the growing list of agencies which have, in varying degrees and forms, repudiated NAC in recent months. The latest indication (unless another one has occurred since this writing) of NAC's failure to attract support for its policies and actions is evidenced by a letter from Frank Kurt Cylke, Chief of the Library of Congress' Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Cylke replied to a lengthy letter from Mrs. Helen W. Worden, chairman of NAC's Commission on Standards, inviting his Division to "participate in the systematic review, which is just now beginning, of our standards of function and structure."

The reply was brief, and spoke well to the point:

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,  
DIVISION FOR THE BLIND AND  
PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED,  
Washington, D.C., February 23, 1976.

Mrs. HELEN W. WORDEN,  
*Chairman, Commission on Standards,  
National Accreditation Council,  
New York, New York.*

DEAR MRS. WORDEN: I am writing in response to your request of February 17, 1976, that we participate in a review of standards for "library services to blind readers." It is our considered opinion that standards for services to blind and physically handicapped readers are necessary but would better be developed by a professional library group rather than by an agency "serving the blind and visually handicapped" as a prime concern.

As you may know, the Health and Rehabilitative Library Services Division of the American Library Association has voted to declare the NAC standards for library service to the blind obsolete. Further, a subcommittee of the Standards Committee of the Health and Rehabilitative

Library Services Division will be formed to initiate the development of standards for library services for both the blind and physically handicapped. This group is to include representatives from other appropriate ALA divisions, relevant agencies, and user organizations.

We appreciate your keeping us informed of your activities; however, based upon the ALA actions, and on the stated views of

many library agencies in our network, we will not participate in the review.

Sincerely yours,

FRANK KURT CYLKE,  
*Chief.*

Chalk up another one for NAC! □

### NFB FIGHTS DOG GUIDE DISCRIMINATION

BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

From time to time I get letters from individuals inside and outside the Federation taking me to task for what they believe is my negative stand on dogs and blind persons who use them. I imagine this idea that I am "anti-dog" comes from the fact that at the Iowa Commission for the Blind we teach the cane as a means of travel. This, of course, does not mean that I oppose dogs or frown upon their users.

In fact, I hope that we never get to the point in this Movement where we spend our time wrangling with one another about the respective merits of cane or dog. If we do, our enemies will finish us off in a hurry. Besides, we have enough of them right now to satisfy any normal desire for combat.

The strength of Federationism is that we have recognized that the single problem of discrimination faced by one blind person usually represents a common difficulty which affects us all. If a blind student, for example, is prevented from registering for a chemistry course because somebody thinks he will be a hazard to himself and others, this is not just discrimination against one

individual in an isolated instance—it is part of a general pattern of denial of opportunity: a problem which all blind persons face, wherever they live and whatever they do. When blind shopworkers are victims of substandard wages and working conditions, we are all seen as second-class.

So it is with blind persons, canes, and dogs. If a blind person who uses a dog is refused a room at a hotel because the manager believes the dog will tear up the rug or damage the furnishings, we must all be prepared to do battle on his behalf. The same goes if a blind person uses a cane and is denied services available to the public at large. The point is that discrimination must be dealt with and exposed.

At any one time in the Federation we have a great many cases of discrimination at one stage or another in the process of resolution. In some of these the National Office takes the lead; in others it seems better to begin at the local level. In any event the National Office will provide guidance, advice, and support, including financial support to the extent that we have the resources to do it.

Thus, I was recently contacted by leaders of the Federation in the Washington, D.C., area concerning a case developing in Northern Virginia. The matter involves a blind person, Ms. Magnolia Lyons, who uses a dog. This case has a bit of a different twist and is somewhat unique. I asked Jim Gashel to look into it, and to assist our local leadership in developing a plan of attack.

The basic point at issue is a blind person's right to be accompanied by a dog guide when visiting a physician's office to seek medical services. On October 18, 1975, Ms. Lyons (a resident of Alexandria, Virginia) arrived for a scheduled appointment to see her doctor. Upon entering his waiting room, she was informed by the receptionist that she would not be permitted to remain in the office with her dog, Ladd. Of course, Ms. Lyons protested, at which point the doctor sent out the word (through another employee) that "the dog must go, no matter what."

While the refusal of service to persons using dogs is intolerable under any circumstances, it is nothing short of astonishing and outrageous that a medical doctor should refuse to treat a patient accompanied by a dog guide. Therefore, we have endeavored to be of assistance to Ms. Lyons in this case.

On January 12, 1976, two complaints were filed simultaneously—one with the Alexandria Medical Society and one with the Virginia Commonwealth's Attorney for the City of Alexandria. Both take the position that refusing medical services to a blind person because the person is accompanied by a dog guide constitutes a violation of the White Cane Law. The NFB of Virginia successfully passed the model through the Virginia Legislature four years ago.

On January 19, 1976, the Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney wrote the doctor

pursuant to our complaint, putting him on notice. His letter reads:

"Enclosed you will find a copy of a letter sent to our office by the Special Counsel of the National Federation of the Blind, relating to an incident which allegedly took place in your office October 18, 1975.

"Please be advised that no criminal charges have been placed against you at this time but we do want you to know that if the facts of the incident are as reported by Ms. Lyons, a violator of §63.1-171.2 has taken place. A copy of this Virginia Code section is also enclosed.

"With the hope that any future difficulties of this sort can be avoided, I am,

"Yours truly,

"J. E. GREENBACKER, Jr."

On March 26, 1976, Ms. Lyons brought a civil action in the Virginia Circuit Court, and we are assisting her with the litigation. This will be the first court test of our Model White Cane Law in Virginia. It will also be the first case nationally that I know of where we have gone into court to challenge the denial of medical treatment based on a blind person's using a dog.

In this case and others we will go to the "barricades" to oppose discrimination wherever we find it. For my part this is longstanding and sound Federation policy.

Recently, a Federationist wrote me, expressing his concern about our stand on dogs. In responding, I assured him:

"[A]lthough I do not use a dog myself, (preferring a cane), I am not 'anti-dog.' Ask Diane McGeorge. She can tell you that I would fight for Pony, and (by the way) he would fight for me." □



## RICHARD EDLUND REAPPOINTED BY MAYOR

CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KANSAS,  
*February 18, 1976.*

Mr. RICHARD EDLUND,  
*Kansas City, Kansas.*

DEAR MR. EDLUND: It is a pleasure for me to reappoint you to the Commission on Human Relations for another three-year term. I am also reappointing you as Chairman of the Commission for this year.

Knowing and observing how well you have managed your own business; the devotion and unselfish committed service you have given to the Commission, I can think of no one better qualified for this important position within our City government. You have my heartfelt congratulations.

I am sure, with your expertise, the Commission on Human Relations will develop among all citizens of Kansas City, Kansas, those creative productive and meaningful relations which will make for total equity in human rights, social justice, and economic security.

Best wishes for a successful administration of the Commission under your leadership.

Very truly yours,

JOHN E. REARDON,  
*Mayor.*

□

## NFB VIEWS LIBRARY OF CONGRESS APPROPRIATIONS

BY

JAMES GASHEL

*Editor's Note.—This NFB testimony was delivered before the Subcommittee on Legislative Appropriations of the Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives, on March 3, 1976.*

We are here today, Mr. Chairman, to talk with this Appropriations Subcommittee about the fiscal year 1977 funding of a special service of the Library of Congress—that is, the Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped Program, administered by the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. One year ago, during the annual appropriations process, we were privileged to present our views to this subcommittee, and I am personally pleased

to be back before you again this year to provide continuing input so that the members can benefit from the perspective of the patrons who depend heavily on this specialized service. Mr. Chairman, last year the subcommittee considered carefully our views and recommendations, and we were particularly pleased with the attention given our various concerns. We were also most gratified with the positive congressional action in support of our library programs.

As a citizen group, a large group of consumers if you will, we have an intense and direct interest in the Library's service to the blind and physically handicapped. As blind individuals it touches our lives daily,

and it has a critical impact on each of us. It is probably safe to assert that citizens seldom mobilize in a vigorous manner around issues of the type which bring us together this morning. Whether they should or not may be the point of departure for a stimulating intellectual debate, but polemics is not our purpose here. Our purpose today is rather to emphasize and dramatize for this subcommittee a situation which we, as blind people, face.

Library service for anyone is of considerable significance. Books have often been described as the keys which unlock the doors of knowledge and thought, both modern and classical. Historically, libraries are said to be the people's universities. This being the case, the blind, along with others, must be afforded all possible access.

But I would also ask each of you on this subcommittee to consider something else. The Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped Program of the Library of Congress is not just one more service in a total array of services thrust upon us by big government in an ever increasingly complex society. This particular effort is specifically directed at solving a unique problem which we as citizens confront—that is, the inaccessibility of books. For the sighted, modern printing plants produce a veritable avalanche of literature, and readers are bombarded with such a tempting array of titles that book selection itself becomes a major undertaking. Moreover, books are made available through a variety of sources including local public libraries, bookstores, book-of-the-month clubs, newsstands, and so forth. Virtually everywhere one turns, there is something available to read.

For the blind, on the other hand, such is not at all the case. For us there are no massive presses operating day in and day out to

catch up with our demands for more and better books. For us there are no giant publishing houses catering to our every desire and anxious to fulfill our every wish for the world's literature, whether the best or the worst. We depend largely on a single source—the Library of Congress Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Mr. Chairman, for most blind people there would literally be nothing to read if books were not made available through this nationally coordinated program. Thus, the dollars which you appropriate represent a significant investment for us when they are translated into new books and/or new playback equipment necessary for reading them. Certainly, the many worthwhile programs of the Library of Congress impact substantially on people's lives and livelihoods, but in no case do they reach out so far across America as they do in the case of providing books for the blind.

With this as a background, Mr. Chairman, we come before the subcommittee today to express our strong support for the appropriations request of the Library of Congress for funds to operate the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped during the fiscal year 1977. As you know, the Division's total budget estimate is \$22,637,000. Of particular significance to us, of course, is the fact that the greatest percentage of these funds (over eighty percent, to be exact) is, according to the justifications, to be allocated directly for the purpose of providing books and necessary machines for library users. We believe that this is, in fact, where the emphasis should be placed—direct service to the readers.

Mr. Chairman, we who depend heavily on this particular service do hope that the subcommittee will be able to approve the full budget request so that the required

amount can actually be appropriated by the Congress in the end. This subcommittee has previously heard testimony from the Division's Chief, Mr. Cylke, who outlined and summarized the justifications submitted. While expressing our overall and strong support today, and while demonstrating our profound interest in adequate financing of this program, we also want to renew our request that you give special attention to particular priority items in the Library's budget proposal. We, therefore, will restrict our comments to certain key areas.

Last year, when we appeared before this subcommittee to present our views concerning the Library's appropriations request for fiscal year 1976, we expressed major concern over what appeared to be a de-emphasis of Braille production in favor of sound recordings. While we fully recognized the impact of inflationary trends which have substantially increased the costs of this particular medium, we emphasized the need to do more than simply meet these increases. Specifically, we asked that more titles be made available in Braille.

Mr. Chairman, we continue to be concerned about this area, since it is obvious to anyone that Braille production continues to lag far behind the production of recorded discs and cassette books. Over the years there has been increased emphasis on recorded books, resulting in a proportionate decrease in financial resources expended to provide books in Braille. This approach in our judgement is unjustified, and we are pleased that the Library is beginning to respond appropriately. For Braille production, the current budget request includes an increase of \$424,474—from \$1,293,700 appropriated for fiscal year 1976 to \$1,717,174 requested for fiscal year 1977.

If it receives this amount, the Library estimates that it will be able to add 350 new Braille titles to the collection during the coming year. For several years the goal has been 300 titles per year, but this has seldom been reached, even though established as a benchmark.

We believe that the requested increase of fifty titles represents a good-faith effort to provide a more meaningful Braille service to blind readers. Of course, we would like to have seen a more substantial increase since Braille production continues to lag far behind that of sound recordings. We recognize that, at least for the short run, the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped finds itself restricted by the limited production capacity of available Braille presses. We were pleased to hear what we take to be a commitment on the Division's part to request another increase of not fewer than fifty titles to be produced in Braille during fiscal year 1978. This is a move in the right direction and represents a reversal of previous trends.

We are also pleased to report to this subcommittee that Dr. Boorstin, the new Librarian of Congress, has indicated to us that he will give priority to stimulating improved methods for producing books in Braille. We welcome and heartily applaud this initiative, Mr. Chairman. In a few weeks we will be meeting with the Librarian and others to explore in detail the possibilities, and we are confident that real breakthroughs can be made. In fact, the modern technology for improving methods of Braille production and distribution does exist, but it has been waiting in the wings for someone to become interested enough so that the necessary financial and manpower resources can be devoted to the task. That interest now apparently exists, and we are keenly

appreciative of it. We hope that in a short while we will truly have some progress to report to this subcommittee, and that the blind, the Congress, and the Library can work together to the end that more efficient and more cost-effective methods of producing Braille will result in more books on our shelves.

Moving now to the area of sound recordings, we note with pleasure the request for enough funding during fiscal year 1977 to make available an additional 1,300 titles for national distribution. According to the Library, this can be done at a cost of \$7,481,350. The fiscal year 1976 objective for new acquisitions of sound recordings was only 1,000 titles.

Unquestionably the Library's recorded book service is the one used by most of its patrons. Constituting a broad cross section of the general population as they do, they possess interests as divergent as those you would find elsewhere in society. The upshot, of course, is that their reading demands are similarly diverse, and they can only be met with a wide variety of titles in all subject areas. Traditionally, the Library's collection in the recorded media as well as in Braille has been severely limited and has increased only by small annual increments. While the collection is still woefully inadequate, Mr. Chairman, the increments are getting larger, thanks in large part to the foresight and wisdom of this subcommittee and also to a more aggressive approach to collection development by the Library itself. Thus we greet warmly the additional request for more titles, but we also hasten to add that even more must be done in the future to make up for the shortcomings of the past.

Turning to another matter, Mr. Chairman, the policy of establishing multistate

centers, which is the newest concept in the Books for the Blind distribution plan, continues to constitute a problem for us. Last year we brought this issue of multistate centers to the attention of this committee, and we were very pleased that you were able to explore it in some depth. For the fiscal year 1976 the Library requested \$100,000 for the multistate center operations. The actual amount appropriated for fiscal year 1976 was \$87,500 or 0.5% of the Division's total appropriations for that year.

This year for fiscal year 1977 the Division is requesting \$169,000. This amount is 0.7% of the total budget of \$22,637,000 requested. Since we do not believe that the effort to establish and maintain multistate centers is well advised, we are concerned that a greater portion of the total budget is proposed to be devoted to them. This should not be done, since it means that fewer books will be placed in the hands of the patrons. In this connection we observe that while a greater portion of the budget is to be allocated to multistate centers, it is proposed that proportionate decreases be made in expenditures for recorded and Braille books, even though as previously stated the number of books produced in both media would actually increase. Thus during fiscal year 1976 the Division allocated 34.5% of its total resources to the production of recorded books, and 8.1% to the production of Braille, but in fiscal year 1977 it proposes to assign less to these purposes on a proportionate basis—33% for sound recordings and 7.6% for Braille.

At present the Library supports two multistate centers—one in Florida, and one in Utah. Together these centers provide certain services to regional and subregional libraries in twenty-six states. The main

value of these centers according to the Division in its testimony before this subcommittee, is decreased mailing time for supplying the libraries. Even so, we do not believe that decentralizing the Division is a satisfactory alternative for meeting the problem. Increasingly as the multistate centers are expanded, the network of regional and subregional libraries will inevitably grow more dependent, thus tending to avoid their responsibilities for providing quality service at the state level. Mr. Chairman, we must not allow the regional and subregional libraries across this country to fall back on the theory that Big Brother will be able to provide. Certainly it is our position that the Division should serve the network of libraries, but that it can best do this by providing them with a wider array of titles, improved quality of book selection, and the necessary quantity of machines.

Mr. Chairman, in concluding this presentation today, it is important to emphasize the basic point of our philosophy. Our experience as blind people teaches us that when given proper training and when provided with an opportunity, we are able to compete on terms of equality in this society. In order to do this, of course, we must have available to us all of the resources provided for our sighted colleagues. Historically, the library service which has been offered to us has not measured up even to the lowest

of standards established for similar programs to serve other citizens. Constantly, it should be borne in mind that library standards indicate that a small library established for sighted readers should have a minimum of 100,000 titles, while the largest library for the blind in the entire world has no more than 40,000. Incidentally, this figure far and away exceeds the collection size of most libraries for the blind in this country. Also it should be remembered that while the funds appropriated for the fiscal year 1977 will permit a production of 1,650 new books in Braille and recorded forms, most libraries are adding upwards of ten times that many titles to their already substantial collections, and that 1,650 new titles produced for the blind is a far cry from the nearly 50,000 new titles printed in the English language annually. This data reveals that much remains to be done if library service to the blind is ever to become comparable. Clearly a great challenge lies ahead, but the task is worth the doing.

Mr. Chairman, we appreciate the past support of this subcommittee and that of the Congress as a whole for this particular program. This year, as in the past, we ask for that continued support, and we request that the full appropriations be granted. While this, in our opinion, is only a small part of what is actually needed, it is a move in the right direction. □

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## DISCRIMINATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

EARLENE GARDNER

*Editor's Note.—Mrs. Gardner is president of the Aiken Chapter of the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind. This article is reprinted from the February 1976 issue of the Palmetto-Auroran, publication of the South Carolina affiliate.*

I entered USC-A in 1972 as a freshman journalism student. The South Carolina Commission for the Blind sponsored me, and my advisor encouraged me to strive for a degree in journalism. He and I both felt that since I loved to write and exhibited ability in creative writing, this degree would put me into a professional world where there could be little or no prejudice against my blindness. I spent three years on the Aiken campus struggling with the necessary courses. During this time I carried between fifteen and eighteen hours each semester and with God's help and the understanding of my family, I was able to maintain a 4.0 GPR. My journalism teacher and course advisor, Ernestine Law, was always enthusiastic about my work and encouraged me to continue. Since Aiken is unable to offer a completed journalism degree, she consulted with Dean Scroggins to make certain that I would be allowed to obtain my degree from the main USC campus in Columbia. He assured her that on her recommendation and my GPR, I would be accepted without question. He also offered to allow her to teach me privately any courses that might present transportation problems for me.

At the close of the spring 1975 semester, I had completed all the available courses I

needed at USC-A. Mrs. Law made an appointment for me with Dr. Henry Price, dean of the News-Editorial sequence of the School of Journalism. He was to be my advisor in Columbia and I needed to see him about my schedule for the fall. My appointment was at 10:00 a.m. April 28. I was excited over the prospect of meeting Dr. Price and having an opportunity to explore the building where I was to have classes for the next three semesters. Charles, my husband, had an appointment with an advisor in the Engineering Department and left me with my trusty cane in Dr. Price's waiting room. I didn't have long to wait, for Price soon ushered me into his office. "Ushered" is the wrong term. Actually, he grabbed my arm and physically led me to a chair, completely ignoring my cane and my ability with it. I smiled indulgently, excusing this all-too-common faux pas of the sighted. He seemed friendly enough and for several minutes we chatted about trivial things—his inability with any foreign language, especially German, which had been his parents' native tongue; his excitement over a former editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* teaching some feature-writing classes in the fall; his wife's going back to college and getting a General Studies degree. Then, when I was totally disarmed, he attacked me, telling me in no uncertain terms that I could not finish my degree in journalism. I, in a state of shock, was unable to retaliate properly. However, I managed to ask why. He told me that if he allowed me to obtain this degree, I would be a direct reflection on him. I muttered something about my 4.0 and he countered by stating that he

would prefer a mediocre student who might fail his editorial courses several times, to me. I mentioned that Mrs. Law had been given permission to teach me privately on the Aiken campus those courses that might present any problems on main campus (like reporting, since my husband could easily drive me any place I needed to be in Aiken or Augusta). Dr. Price told me then that it was he and only he who would not permit this. He also stated that Ernestine Law was one of persons in the State most qualified to do such private instruction. Having said his piece, he then insisted I go to speak with a man in the General Studies program. I told him that I did not want a GS degree. (After all, a GS degree and fifteen cents will buy a good cup of coffee, but I wanted a profession.) I told him I would go into the English Department if I wasn't wanted in journalism. The good doctor then queried if I *really* believed the English Department would accept me. With this he escorted me back to the waiting room, once again ignoring my cane and dragging me awkwardly along with him.

I sat on the couch, waiting for Charles and praying I would not cry, for I didn't want to give such a man the satisfaction of my tears. A young girl who worked in the office came to me and said that Dr. Price had made an appointment for me in the GS Department and had told her to take me there—like so much baggage! I told her that I wasn't going, but she stood there wringing her hands. I suggested that she go tell Price to call his friend in GS and tell him not to expect me. She was soon back, more agitated than before. She had not been able to find the good doctor, who had ducked out of the office. So I went with her to the General Studies Department because, after all, she was innocent and her job was to get me out of Price's office. I

made short work of my visit to GS, telling the young man my story briefly and leaving.

My husband and I—I in tears of rage and hurt—chased all over Columbia, looking for someone in the South Carolina Commission for the Blind to help me. Finally we were directed to Bill Coleman who heard my story, promised to make some calls, and told us to come back in a couple of hours. When we came back to Coleman's office, we found Dan Turbeville with Coleman. Both these astute men had solved my problem! First, they advised me to be "understanding" toward the unaware sighted folks. Next they told me that they could force USC to accept me, but that wouldn't be a good policy because it would cause hard feelings, and besides, Dr. Price would have to teach me several courses. They told me not to get upset, that I could still have my degree in journalism because the University of Missouri has an excellent journalism department and the Commission was willing to pay for me to go! They never bothered to consider that a wife and mother can't pack up and leave her family just to make things more pleasant for the Colemans and Prices who slither about their neat little offices.

Back in Aiken, I told this nightmare to Mrs. Law and to Ron Halbert at the local office of the Commission. They were both "very sorry." Now, nine months later, I face receiving an inferior degree in May. I want to teach, but having been advised to stay in journalism, I don't have the necessary education courses to be certified. I can only pray that someone will hire me to teach on a warrant while I work on a master's in English. There has been good from this shambles, however. I know now that merit is a frail armor against the rabid prejudices of the Henry Prices who mushroom

throughout our environment. Knowing this, I am stronger. I am prepared to fight. And most of all, I'm determined to protect others who are blind from a similar fate. I, who had been shielded from such senseless,

spirit-maiming attacks, have now lost my simple belief in the innate kindness of all mankind. With this knowledge comes strength and a thirst for battle. Watch out, all you Henry Prices! □

## BLIND OF NEBRASKA TRY FOR BETTER LIBRARY SERVICES

"When was the last time you said, 'Something has got to be done about that library!' Was it the last time you received a book that you didn't order; or couldn't get a book you did order. Or was it the time you wanted a book on scientific method and the library sent you *All About Dinosaurs*?

"Many of us who read simply for pleasure feel that we have had our share of frustrating experiences with the library, but perhaps we have not felt the inadequacies of our library as sharply as students and researchers whose demands on the library are greater. Perhaps it would be easier for us, since we're used to it, to settle for less than adequate library service. But what about the future library users who will follow? Will they, too, have to put up with frequently unreadable records and poor book selections?"

So began a release sent out by the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska in support of L.B. 661, introduced into the State Legislature by Senator Gerald D. Koch on behalf of the NFB during the session just ended. The effort to obtain passage of the bill was led by Marsha Bangert, chairperson of the NFB of Nebraska Legislation Committee. The bill had support from most other organizations of and for the blind in the State.

The bill proposed a very simple and obvious solution for these problems: transfer

the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped from the administration of the Nebraska Library Commission to that of the Division of Rehabilitative Services for the Visually Impaired.

At a somewhat later date, a letter was sent to Senator Koch further outlining the advantages which would accrue to the blind and physically handicapped upon passage of the bill, including the fact that under the administration of the Rehabilitative Services program, larger amounts of Federal funds would be available with a lesser amount of State matching. In addition, duplication of services could be eliminated and "materials now being taped or brailled by Services for the Visually Impaired would be done as a function of the library services with the passage of L.B. 661. This means that all of those materials will be available through the library to *all* patrons, including the physically handicapped.

"Third, volunteers now working with Services for the Visually Impaired will be available to transcribe material for all patrons.

"Fourth, field staff of Services for the Visually Impaired will be calling on people referred from the library and will guarantee good services to those eligible and will be able to refer other patrons to the Vocational Rehabilitation agency. Highly trained



staff will be more competent in providing services to all patrons than through regular field contact that is now the practice.

"Fifth, I have enclosed a copy of 'History of the Iowa Library for the Blind,' and a copy of 'Independence,' the 1975 annual report of the Iowa Commission for the Blind. I think you will find both of these interesting and informative. We have been unable to get data from the Nebraska Library, so we cannot set forth a comparison to the Iowa Library. However, even though the Iowa Library is considerably younger, we doubt that the Nebraska Library can even begin to measure up. I have marked some passages in the above references for your convenience. Please note that the Iowa Library is only fifteen-and-a-half years old compared to Nebraska's well over twenty; the Iowa Library has over 1200 volunteer transcribers compared to less than a dozen in Nebraska; the Iowa Library processes almost forty thousand books per month, we are sure this is vastly greater than Nebraska. As each year passes Nebraska library users stand less and less of a chance of obtaining quality library services which will benefit all aspects of their lives!

"Library services to the blind began with the passage of the 'Books for the Blind' program by the United States Congress on March 31, 1931. This legislation was amended on July 30, 1966 to include the physically handicapped. The National Federation of the Blind endorsed this amendment! Senator Mansfield had such testimony entered into the *Congressional Record* on June 29, 1966. One part of that testimony is especially important to the blind: 'The committee under no circumstances intends for the present library service to those blind individuals who are currently receiving books in Braille and talking books

to be diluted in any way because of the expansion of this program.' We believe the historical intent of the law is quite clear: such library services were historically and foremost intended for the blind; subsequent inclusion of the physically handicapped should not deteriorate the rights of the blind to have high quality library services.

"Again, we thank you for your efforts in our behalf."

Despite years of disregarding the many expressions of discontent with services, the Library Commission seemed surprised that the NFB should initiate such an action. There was immediate retaliation. It seems an almost normal reaction of professionals challenged by laymen, and blind laymen to boot. The Special and Institutional Library Section of the Nebraska Library Association sent out the following "Statement to the Public," along with a copy of the bill:

"The enclosed bill, L.B. 661, has been introduced in our legislature proposing to transfer the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped from the Nebraska Library Commission to Rehabilitative Services for the Visually Impaired.

"We believe in a Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped functioning within the framework of statewide library service for *all* persons.

"The Nebraska Library Commission Network of Communications reaches to the smallest library in the State. The growing involvement of communities in library outreach benefits the blind and physically handicapped because they are included—not separated—from the whole of life.

"Communities are now acutely aware that their blind and physically handicapped citizens are library users, too. We think that this is good for all concerned. The talking book records, cassette books, Braille, and large print books go out to young and old throughout the State and are adaptive to many uses. They are rich resources for the mind and spirit. The value of their use cannot be calculated.

"Our society is constantly being criticized, and rightly so, for separating and dividing our people—for creating dehumanizing procedures that destroy the human spirit. The Nebraska Library Commission has worked toward the goal of library service for all—to the smallest town—to the individual in an isolated home. Progress has been made.

"We believe that if the Nebraska Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is separated out of the Nebraska Library Network to be a special and separate library, all will lose some library service benefits that the association with an unsegregated community brings, including the blind and physically handicapped persons.

"Will you please express your library needs and views now and at all times to the Nebraska Library Commission and to your senators.

"THE SPECIAL AND  
INSTITUTIONAL LIBRARY SECTION,  
NEBRASKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION."

Let us ignore for the time being the blatant play on the fears and stereotypes of the handicapped and the sighted about the condition of the blind and disabled and look instead at some other facts about this particular mailing. It was mailed to the

Library's user list and sent under its "Free Matter" franking privilege.

The NFB noticed these violations of Federal regulations and promptly fired off letters to the Postal Inspector in Lincoln, Nebraska, and to Frank Kurt Cylke, Chief of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress. Both promised to look into the matter. However, Mr. Cylke said that "I have asked Mrs. Geske and Mrs. Warnholz to cease using their mailing list for such purposes until we receive guidance from Mr. Kominski." (Mr. Kominski is the Library of Congress General Counsel; Mrs. Geske the Director of the Nebraska Library Commission; and Mrs. Warnholz the Librarian for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.) In addition, the NFB of Nebraska requested permission for access to the Library users list which had been made available to the Library Association and expressed willingness to have a release mailed with the Library's own statement, if it wished to make one, in a joint mailing. The reply could have been anticipated:

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION,  
*Lincoln, Nebraska, February 12, 1976.*

Ms. MARSHA BANGERT,  
*Lincoln, Nebraska.*

DEAR MARSHA: As promised, I am writing you about your proposed Open Letter to Users of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. If the National Federation of the Blind is to be effective in its campaign for "improvement and development of library services," it should present an alternative proposal to present services other than a mere transfer of authority for that library.

The position paper from the Library Commission, given at the hearing for L.B. 661, stressed the need for library environs for these services and yet recognized that a study of present resources and services ought to come out of the introduction of this bill. The mailed statement to the public followed that position paper. The inclusion of L.B. 661 with it was intended to show that both sides were being presented.

If another, joint, mailing is to go out to the borrowers it should be to gain support for an expanded program. The staff has just reviewed the last two surveys, *A Study of the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped* (1973), and the earlier *Evaluation of the Nebraska Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped* (1971) to determine achievements made according to recommendations and standards. Both surveyors, Joan Maier, consultant of Boulder, Colorado, and Adeline Franzell, New Jersey Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, spoke of the "competence and dedication of the staff, of the fine 'cooperative relations,' and of the inadequacy of the staff in terms of numbers."

In the past three to five years some great advances have been made in terms of cooperative efforts, expansion of program, increased staff, and financial support. Two borrowers studies are being conducted this month in two areas of the State.

If you have similar studies of the Nebraska Services for the Visually Impaired, with appropriate progress on national standards and goals, the two programs might be sent to borrowers to give them an alternative and a chance to support the program desired. This would be preferable to two statements on what is wrong with the two agencies

without any expression of program needs.

As indicated to you by telephone, I would like to meet with you and your committee. I was sorry you felt this was not possible. I think we all want the same thing.

Sincerely,

JANE P. GESKE,  
*Director, Nebraska Library Commission.*

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When blind people bring their many, long-standing complaints about poor library service to public attention and even tender a solution which will bring better funding, they are told to "present an alternative proposal" with "studies" on "appropriate national standards and goals." That sounds familiar to *Monitor* readers who recall NAC's demands for "documentation." Somehow those demands are not required of anyone else. When workers strike for improved working conditions and they come to the bargaining table to discuss the matter with management, the major problem is to resolve the grievances. Management does not require the workers to supply the blueprint for implementing and/or funding any agreement—though such may be offered. But blind people and the National Federation of the Blind are expected to do so.

Members of the NFB of Nebraska, some staff members of the State agency, and many others, sent a flood of letters to the members of the Legislature in support of the proposed act. In addition, the State affiliate submitted the following letter to be included in the February Newsletter of the League of Human Dignity.

"L.B. 661, a legislative bill to relocate the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped to the Division of Rehabilitative Services for the Visually Impaired is now being considered by the Government, Military, and Veterans' Affairs Committee of the Nebraska Unicameral.

"The National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska sought this change because of years of inadequate library services in Nebraska. Patrons receive books they neither wanted nor ordered; and it is often a great inconvenience to return these books. Patrons have had difficulty getting materials they want and need. While these materials are often not readily accessible, there are only token attempts to get the materials produced in the media desired. Many patrons no longer attempt to seek such services from their Library; but instead seek other means—often at their own expense in both time and money—for services the Library should render.

"Library services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is a Federal program which is administered by a State agency, must be available to the blind and to the physically handicapped. Indeed, the National Federation of the Blind was instrumental in seeking passage of the bill to include the physically handicapped during the national legislative action in 1966. Again, it was the intention of the NFB to improve library services to all patrons by seeking passage of this bill. It is the responsibility of the Library of Congress to provide materials only. It is the responsibility of the State agency to provide quality services.

"The NFB of Nebraska believes that library services would improve tremendously if the library were relocated. These library

services have been available in Nebraska for over twenty years! The physically handicapped have been included since 1966! Yet the service available to patrons has not nearly reached its potential. Ideally, a library should have a balanced book collection; catalogs and booklists should be available on tape and in Braille; extensive reference service should be available; a patron should be able to have bibliographies prepared to order in the desired media; items should be able to be produced to order on tape or in Braille, and such production facilities should be on hand and manned by competent staff; high quality reader's advisory services should be available; the library should be in touch with patrons in person, by mail, and by phone—in and out WATS (Wide Area Telephone Service) should be available; complaints and suggestions should be followed up; the patron should decide the method of book selection; periodicals should be received before they are out of date; materials should be in good shape when they are mailed; the staff should know about its equipment; the library should be open such hours that patrons who wish to could visit; instructional materials and textbooks should be readily available; and classes on library usage should be held.

"These kinds of services are regularly available to patrons of public libraries. Why should they not be available to patrons of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped?

"The Division of Rehabilitative Services for the Visually Impaired has stated and shown its willingness to help achieve these goals. The NFB of Nebraska does not believe these goals are unrealistic, but that they are reasonable to expect! Repeated attempts to improve library services under the Library

Commission have failed for years! It is time for all patrons of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped to insist on their right to quality library services. Join the effort of the NFB of Nebraska to pass this legislation. . . ."

But when all the correspondence was in, the newstories written, the testimony given, the Legislature decided to send the whole matter back to committee for interim study. Before adjournment, two resolutions were introduced which called for answers to the many questions raised by the blind and to discover the best means of providing

good services. The Executive Director of the Library Commission resigned "for personal reasons" after news of the legislative resolutions became public.

While the bill may have been lost for this session, the effort expended by the NFB of Nebraska will certainly prove worthwhile to all the handicapped in that State. Hearings are planned for various regions, and the blind and the other disabled will be able to have their problems heard by legislative personnel directly. With the problems fully exposed, better solutions are sure to follow. □

#### ATTACKING A LEFT-HANDED PROBLEM IN A RIGHT-HANDED WORLD

BY

MARYANN SMITH

[Reprinted from the January 1976 issue of *Business and Industry Magazine*.]

"Most people lie in their teeth when they talk about how they're absolutely convinced that a blind person can do whatever anybody else can do," says Kenneth Jernigan, Director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind. "To get people to believe it at the gut level is a very difficult job."

Acknowledging that there are certain things each individual, whether blind or sighted, cannot do, Jernigan is firm in his conviction that the blind can compete right down the line with anybody else in everyday life and on the job.

"It depends on what you would have me do," says Jernigan, who has been blind all his life. "If you want me to reach something on a high shelf, there are a couple of fellows on my staff who are taller than I am. If you want me to be a jockey, I'm too heavy.

"If you want me to get out of a burning building at night, chances are I can do it better than a sighted person," he says. "But if you want us to play baseball, chances are a sighted person can do it better."

Yet Jernigan can turn to a file and pull out a photograph of a blind person water-skiing or sawing wood. He can show the visitor through the Commission's six-floor headquarters and Orientation building in Des Moines, or a blind guy taking a turn on the punching bag, cooking his own meal in the Center's kitchen, or learning to walk confidently with the long white cane around the busy streets of Des Moines.

In employment Jernigan can cite case after case of blind persons working in a variety of jobs—teaching, engineering, machinist, office worker, radio dispatcher, and real estate.

However, the doors of many employers and some educational institutions remain closed to the blind. Employers, particularly where machine operation is involved, consider the blind a safety problem—post and higher education facilities plead a dearth of accommodations.

A native of Tennessee, Jernigan was a teacher and administrator in the California Orientation Center for the Blind before coming to Iowa in 1958. He has a master's degree from George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee.

Since Jernigan came to the Commission its program and services have changed from a restrictive "big brother" philosophy to one which emphasizes independence and a competitive attitude.

Jernigan views blindness as a physical nuisance, not a major tragedy. He equates it with being left-handed in a world structured for right-handed people. Being left-handed then becomes a physical nuisance which one must adapt to a predominantly right-handed world.

Because he recognizes that one must try harder to overcome long-standing misunderstandings about such "nuisances," he sees the Commission's major job as "brain-washing" to change attitudes among blind persons, workers with the blind, and the public at large.

Although Jernigan doesn't feel he can speak for the blind as the head of a state agency, he does do so as President of the National Federation of the Blind. He has served in the office since 1968.

He is a strong advocate of the blind running their own lives and is critical of the

paternalistic attitude of the welfare establishment and professionals in the field. "It's the same thing you had in Colonialism," he says. "I think the British did a far better job for the British in India than they did for the Indians. It's not to say that they're mean or bad people. They're motivated by their own self-interest."

"It's the same with the blind. A blind person in the job doesn't mean he'll do any better job than a sighted person. We have blind Uncle Toms, sell-outs, and apologists just as you have black. None of us is perfect," he says.

Jernigan quotes Churchill's "Democracy is the worst form of government except all others," and adds, "It's inefficient, we make the wrong decisions at times, but the safest repository for the rights of the people is in their own hands."

And his staff of 105 has been chosen in keeping with this philosophy. "I look for somebody with some brains and ingenuity," he says; "someone who can be innovative and creative. I want someone who, if you pitched him down absolutely naked into a strange country and didn't know the language at all, would be either running the place in six months or living quite comfortably."

Jernigan really doesn't care whether the person has the skills for the job. He can teach those. About thirty percent of his staff is blind. Whether blind or sighted the person must have worked at least one year competitively, and could have continued, somewhere else.

"Blind people have to see blind persons they can respect and wish they were like," he says. "They've got to see blind persons

who are actually making money, competing and succeeding in the world."

He sees the Commission's job as three-fold: (1) Help the blind person realize emotionally as well as intellectually that he can compete on terms of equality with others; (2) Help him acquire skills that will make this possible; and (3) Help the person realize that even though he achieves one and two, unless he takes into account public attitudes about blindness and is prepared to do something about those, not let them upset him and throw him, he may still fail.

Commission personnel make a special effort to create an atmosphere that makes them distinct from other State agencies. Dress is conservative, hair is well groomed—no way-out length or styles. All persons are addressed as Miss, Mrs., or Mr. whether it's a janitor or the Director. Jernigan is a stickler for good manners and maintaining a business atmosphere.

When asked if this atmosphere doesn't run counter to sign-carrying demonstrations the NFB have held at annual conventions in New York, Jernigan likened the NFB dissidence to a bunch of bankers picketing.

"We want change," he explains. "But we want the substance of victory not the shade of it and we don't want the hangovers that some of the other minorities have experienced."

He firmly believes that conservative dress and good manners do make a difference in the way people are perceived by others. "Our methods shocked the police and people of New York," says Jernigan. "We left a path so people could get through our group, and conducted ourselves in an orderly manner."

And Jernigan quips, "It's a matter of simple mathematics. We're outnumbered in the general population one hundred to one. We'd lose if we started throwing rocks."

In the fiscal year 1975, 142 blind persons were "rehabilitated" through the Iowa Commission's counseling, the Orientation Center, job placement, and training in a skill preparing them for independence whether it's in a job or daily living.

All programs of the Commission are run with an annual appropriation of just under \$2.5 million in State and Federal funds.

While the cost of the intensive training necessary to rehabilitate blind persons may appear high to the observer, Jernigan points out that these persons become partially or totally self-supporting tax-paying citizens. Without the assistance, they may remain dependent citizens drawing Supplemental Security Income through the Social Security program. In Iowa the payment is \$176 a month (\$2,112 a year) for a single person; \$273 (\$3,276) for couples.

"Any self-supporting person in our society would be paying at least \$850 a year in taxes," says Jernigan.

The average length of stay at the Orientation Center is from six to eight months. The emphasis throughout—whether it's learning Braille, learning to walk around the streets with the long cane, in the shop, in the kitchen, playing cards, or conversation is on emotion and attitude.

"We try to get everyone to learn independent mobility," says Jernigan, "and learn some skills."

Those who qualify and want more training are sent on to college, area and voca-

tional schools. Some can go directly into a job. Others may go back home to live independently with the basic skills they have acquired at the Center.

"Homemaking is a job, too," says Jernigan, "and many homemakers have gone through the Orientation Center. We recently took a Catholic sister from Sisinawa, Wisconsin. She was losing her sight and wanted to learn Braille. She has gone back to teach the techniques she learned here to other blind nuns."

Dormitory facilities on the fifth and sixth floors of the building at Fourth and Keo in Des Moines will accommodate thirty-two, an equal number of men and women. Normally, 20-25 persons are enrolled in the orientation program. Between 35 and 50 enroll annually.

There are four staff apartments in the building so blind persons who become sick or have problems are near someone who could help them. "We don't want to be the kind of agency that says, 'Come see us at eight o'clock in the morning,'" says James Omvig, resident staff member.

Only the hearty of mind and body are accepted at the Center. "Some people," says Omvig, "can't keep up with the pace. If we're going to survive in this world one has to have physical stamina, so the pace is fast."

Students are given experiences in classes which will familiarize them with everyday life happenings and perhaps give them some insight into career possibilities.

Since the typewriter is the only way a blind person could communicate by mail with a sighted person, they are required to

learn to use a regular typewriter as well as the Perkins Braille machine.

Many students acquire more exposure to the general public by operating the Commission switchboard, tutored by blind Kathleen Valen, who has been in the job since 1964. Telephone messages are written by the operator in Braille. Some students go on to jobs as switchboard operators.

Shop teacher and travel teacher Paul Hahle feels it's important to get used to a shop and its noises. He doesn't care who you are, everyone has some fear of machines, says Hahle.

"The first time you turn on a saw it sounds as though it's going to jump out and eat you," he says. "If you can get used to that noise you can adapt to almost anything."

For those who can't work in competitive occupations because of age or another handicap, employment may be provided through the Home Industries program of the Commission. Items such as rugs, towels, tablecloths, dishcloths, ironing board covers, and aprons are made and assembled in the person's home, then marketed through the Federated Women's Clubs of Iowa, one of many civic and volunteer groups contributing their services to the blind.

Iowa has a legally blind population of about six thousand. More than five thousand are listed in the Commission for the Blind's confidential register. Thousands of them are served every year in some way by the Commission—from pre-schoolers to the elderly.

The library services of the Commission, the largest library for the blind in the world,



reach thousands of Iowans. Books on long play discs, open reel tapes, tape cassettes, large type, and Braille cover the gamut of topics from the classics and college textbooks to popular magazines and light novels.

Almost forty thousand books were processed each month during fiscal 1975 going out to more than one hundred students in colleges and universities, homemakers and the elderly, public school students, professionals, farmers and factory workers.

The library takes 125,000 square feet of shelf space at the Commission headquarters.

Any individual certified by a doctor as being unable to read ordinary print because of visual problems or because of a physical handicap may borrow books. About twenty percent of the legally blind are totally blind.

In preparing for a career or job, Kenneth Jernigan feels that more blind persons have chosen to go into professional and college-type work than you might have in the general population because there is such tremendous resistance to blind persons in business and industry.

The Commission is helping over one hundred blind students through private, State, junior colleges, vocational schools, and accredited trade schools. They are enrolled in a variety of courses including law, journalism, public administration, teaching, engineering, machine shop, building maintenance, radio and electronics, cosmetology, massage, and hotel-motel management.

Financial help may be total or partial with Federal and Commission funds paying tuition, room and board, for textbooks, notetakers, and readers.

At the public school level, the blind in Iowa represent the smallest group of handicapped served by public education. Over 325 blind students in the system are reached in some way by the Commission's services.

Teachers and consultants rely on the Commission staff as a resource in developing special classroom techniques for blind students to use in their school work. The Commission library becomes a repository for school texts and materials (in Braille, talking books, cassettes, and tapes) which may be drawn out by pupils in the public schools and higher education facilities.

The Des Moines School System has had a special program for the blind and partially sighted for forty-five years. The regular classroom experiences of just over fifty visually impaired children are supplemented by special resource teachers and resource centers.

Special services for children in the eleven-county area outside the Des Moines system are served through the Department of the Visually Impaired Area XI agency. (Other area agencies in the State have or are developing similar services.) The Area Agency maintains close contact with parents of blind students, advising them of new developments and methods which would be helpful in the education of their child. All students, whether they plan on going to college or not, are strongly advised, says Area XI consultant Marie Brown, to go through the Commission's Orientation Center before making a career decision.

"Blind people are like other people," says Jernigan. "If they know that nobody believes they can do it, if they've been conditioned to believe themselves they can't do things from the time they were children

it complicates the problem. This is true of blacks, it's true of others."

One of the most important tenets of the Commission's Orientation Center is to instill this faith in the student's own abilities.

The critical thing is for the blind person to come to have belief in himself, to realize that he can be self-supporting, to learn that he can give as well as take, to be glad that he can have responsibilities, to know that life is good—to dream the impossible dream. To achieve Independence, says the Commission's latest annual report. About ninety percent realize these concepts, according to the report.

"You know the great problem on blacks getting admitted to universities was not that they went there and got turned down," says Jernigan. "Mostly it didn't occur to most of them to try."

The first blind student in modern times, says Jernigan, recently enrolled in the medical school of Temple University in Philadelphia.

William Pearce of Williamsville, New York, who expects to graduate from Drake Law School in May 1976, had no difficulty getting into law school. He applied at two. Most law students try from five to ten colleges, he says.

Pearce took his undergraduate work at Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio, and has a master's degree in social studies from Hiram.

He experienced what he terms "an obvious indication of attitude" toward the blind when exploring undergraduate colleges in the early 1960's. A New York college wrote that their campus would be "too

hilly" for him and a Pennsylvania college in an interview with him and his parents said their sidewalks would be too icy. He and his parents walked out. Pearce hasn't found Iowa sidewalks any less icy than Pennsylvania's!

Pearce travels freely and alone without apparent reticence. He came to Des Moines by air, phoned the dorm that he had arrived, and hopped a cab to the campus. Learning the campus was no more problem to him than to any new student.

Pearce did read large type books through fifth grade, but "hasn't asked his eyes to do it anymore," since learning Braille in sixth grade. He attended the Buffalo Sight Saving School through eighth grade, then went into public schools.

In lectures Pearce depends on a method he doesn't necessarily recommend to anyone else—concentration. He listens, goes back to his dormitory, and makes notes on his Perkins Braille typewriter.

He occasionally uses readers for textbooks he couldn't get recorded. The reader fee is paid from Federal funds provided through the Consortium for Higher Education Special Services (CHESS).

For the most part the Drake law library has been buying print copies of books he would need in class. These volumes are then sent to an Educational Media Service in Illinois which reads it onto a tape. (A 1300-page book requires about twenty-three reels.) The volume is returned to the law library and Illinois loans Pearce the reels until he finishes the course.

As it is in most areas of achievement, motivation is important to academic

success. Joseph Patrick, associate dean of journalism at Drake University, was "amazed" by a blind journalism student who made top grades in a reporting class. She was better academically than those who were sighted, he says. When interviewing persons for a class assignment, she would take Braille notes then type out the story on a regular typewriter. Of course, someone else would have to proofread her story before it could be set in type.

Verbal communication apparently presents no insurmountable problem to the motivated blind student.

However, the concepts of the graphic arts may be elusive if the student is totally blind or has never been sighted.

Ray Benson, who is majoring in public relations at Drake, has enough sight that he can handwrite his notes. Grasping the graphic arts concepts of the communications field—symmetry, half-tone qualities, and use of color have not created a problem for Benson, according to Frank Mathews, associate professor of graphic arts at Drake.

"He is doing extremely well," says Mathews. "He is visually able to grasp the concepts."

Mathews has had two totally blind students. He doesn't feel it's fair to them because forty percent of the class material is projected on the screen.

One of his students couldn't function at all. The other was a highly motivated,

intelligent, and independent person who had a "fantastic memory." "She used Braille notes and a tape and passed the test. But I really don't know how much she got out of the course," he says.

In preparing for industrial vocations, the blind may find just as much reluctance to accept them in some educational institutions as among some employers.

But John Foster, machine shop instructor at Tech high school in Des Moines is not one of them. No machine is off limits to a blind student nor is any machine altered in any way to accommodate the blind.

The only difference is in the Braille imprinted tools which the blind use and which each machinist owns himself. In the case of the blind, the Commission buys the basic tools and pays the tuition for the one-year course.

Foster says the shop usually has one blind student each year. About half of the graduates go into industry. "In general, industry still backs away from hiring the blind because of the safety factor," says Foster.

Yet the blind have a better safety record in his shop than the sighted, says Foster. All students begin on a machine the first day and work their way through all the equipment—engine and turret lathes; horizontal and vertical milling machines; surface grinders; circular grinders; drill presses; bench work; grind their own tool bits; shaper and heat treatment. □

## DO YOU LIKE THE BOOKS YOU GET?

BY

FLORENCE GRANNIS SHROPSHIRE

This is to report my attendance at the Library of Congress, DBPH "Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Implementation of the Collection Development Plan" March 1 and 2 as the NFB representative.

The other members of the group consisted of a representative of the physically handicapped, two representatives of BVA, a representative of ACB, and four representatives of the regional and subregional libraries. As a twenty-five-year veteran of libraries for the blind, I was, by far, the old-timer in terms of service. (As usual, I was the most talkative, too.)

What the meeting was all about, in essence, was to decide which subjects should have the greatest emphasis when selecting the 1100 books which will be recorded or brailled during fiscal 1977, and to determine whether the current book selection provides too much, not enough, or just the correct amount of explicit sex. (One of the librarians just uses the abbreviation e.s. rather than coming right out with that three-letter word.)

There was considerable talk about whether the book collection should be weighted toward "quality" or whether the "trivial" should be given the largest portion of money. This dialogue generated so much heat that one of the other librarians and I were about to have a hair-pulling contest—and she is much larger than I! Needless to say, I was for a "quality" collection—as I always have been.

It was agreed that there would be a continuation of the production of virtually all the best sellers and that books for children would continue to have considerable importance. It was also agreed that other subjects would have to receive a certain amount of priority—science, travel, biography, art, with all the forthcoming "obvious" books selected and at least some of the older titles added, especially in the area of the literary classics.

It was stressed that magazines are very important and that there should be more of them—particularly, a science fiction magazine. Everyone agreed that books should be cassetted in greater proportion than discing and brailling.

The hassle on how much explicit sex to include was lively—to say the least. I maintained that books with explicit sex were the ones being published to an overwhelming degree—that blind people are just people; that libraries for the blind are just public libraries furnishing books in special media—since the borrowers are in the mainstream—their books should be, too. The argument on the other side was that a majority of the readers are more than sixty-five, that they do not want explicit sex so there should be fewer such titles issued each year. (The representative of the southern region of the United States felt the most strongly, but the other regional representatives all agreed with more or less fervor.) The conclusion was that the NFB expressed a minority viewpoint which would be duly considered.

I stressed that book selection and all services from DBPH have improved greatly in recent years—Mr. Cylke is showing effective leadership. There were comments that reader feedback is minimal. Does that mean that everyone is happy with their library service or at least with the book selection? Happy or unhappy, the Division would love to hear from you and if you do not like what you are getting, you have only yourself to blame if you do not communicate your feelings.

The current DBPH budget is sixteen million dollars—95% for production, and of this 95%, 50% for books. Mr. Cylke is requesting twenty-two million dollars for next year.

Within the next year the Division will try fifty titles on flexible discs (throw away)—3500 copies each at a cost of \$350,000. Again, if you get one of these and do not like it, speak up!

The staff believes the catalog of their holdings will be on the computer and printed for the libraries by January of 1977, and, perhaps, sometime in the '80's they will know which books in Braille, disc, and cassette are out in the field.

It was a productive meeting. One senses that the Division staff is a competent, hard-working, responsive group. It was indicated that these meetings will be ongoing—annually—with the consumers duly represented. □

**NOTED BLIND PERSONS IN AMERICAN HISTORY:  
THOMAS PRYOR GORE: "THE BLIND ORATOR"**

BY

SHARON GOLD

Thomas Pryor Gore, the first totally blind man to sit in the United States Senate, was born on December 10, 1870, in Old Choctaw (later known as Webster) County, Mississippi. His father, Thomas Madison Gore, who served as a soldier in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, was a farmer and a lawyer.

An accident, at the age of eight, resulted in the total loss of sight in one of Gore's eyes and severe injury to the other eye, causing him to be totally blind at the age of eleven. Gore continued his studies in the public schools of Walthall, Mississippi. His classmates and members of his family reading his lessons aloud to him. After graduating from high school, in 1888, he studied two additional years taking a "scientific

course." In 1890, Gore graduated from a Normal School, obtained a teaching license, and taught in a public school during the year 1890-1891. He then entered the Cumberland University, in Lebanon, Tennessee, as a student in the School of Law. Shortly after Gore's graduation with an L.L.B. degree in 1892, he was admitted to the bar and began practicing law in Walthall. As a boy, Gore had spent a year serving as a page in the Mississippi Legislature and throughout his school years he had read and studied political economy, the writings of Thomas Jefferson, and any works he could procure on the art and science of government. In 1891, he was nominated for the State Legislature but was forced to withdraw his nomination because he was underage.

Gore, like his father and other relatives, became an active member of the Populist Party and was soon considered the best-known and most able stump speaker for that party. When the Mississippi Populists were defeated in 1895, the "Blind Orator," as he had come to be known, moved to Corsicana, Texas, where he continued to be an active member of the Populist Party and practiced law. In 1896, he served as a delegate to the Populist National Convention in Saint Louis, Missouri, and two years later was defeated as a candidate for the U.S. Congress on the People's Party Ticket. After this, Gore devoted much of his time to national politics and became affiliated with the Democratic Party in 1899. In 1901, following his new allegiance to the Democratic Party, Gore and his wife, Nina Kay, the daughter of a Texas cotton planter, whom he married on December 27, 1900, joined those pioneers who were moving northward to the new Territory of Oklahoma. They settled in Lawton, where Gore opened a law practice and made his permanent home.

Gore's driving ambition, his superb oratorical ability, and the support of the powerful *Daily Oklahoman* in Oklahoma City, soon made the "Blind Orator" a leading politician in the Oklahoma Territory. In 1902, just one year after settling in the Territory, Gore was elected to the Territory Council, and served as member from 1903 to 1905. In 1907, when the Oklahoma and Indian Territories joined to form the new State of Oklahoma, Gore assisted with the writing of the State Constitution and was elected one of its first two Senators. He was reelected for two more terms, serving until 1921. During these terms of service in the United States Senate, Gore was especially interested in legislation affecting the farmer and the Indian, and was credited

with having saved \$30 million in royalties for the Indians by filibustering against a resolution giving private individuals oil lease rights.

During the pre-World War I period, Gore was one of the progressive members of the Senate opposing the trusts, high United States tariff rates, and monopolies, especially the railroads. An important and long-time supporter of Woodrow Wilson as a presidential candidate, Gore helped get Wilson elected in 1912, and endorsed his domestic legislative program. However, with the coming of World War I, Gore took opposition to Wilson's foreign policy and American entry into the war in 1917. During the war, Gore argued against military conscription and pensions, the food administration, emergency governmental control of transportation and communication facilities, and deficit financing. His opposition to Wilson's war-time policies and this country's entry into the League of Nations brought about Gore's defeat by a Wilson supporter in the Democratic primary of 1920.

Gore knew that many of his convictions were unpopular with a large number of his constituents, but being a statesman in preference to a politician, he refused to alter his positions. Thus, he returned to private law practice in 1921. In 1930, Gore was again nominated for Senator from Oklahoma and returned to the Senate for a final term from 1931 to 1937. During this period, Gore took opposition to policies of both a Republican and a Democratic President. He was a strong opponent of Franklin D. Roosevelt's social measures, which Gore considered would lead to an overcentralization of government, thus interfering with individual initiative and enterprise. Gore was in favor of a balanced budget, and was

opposed to deficit spending. For a second time in Gore's career as a Senator, his opposition to the policies of a popular President was responsible for his defeat during his 1936 bid for reelection.

Gore spent the final thirteen years of his life practicing law in Washington, D.C., where he specialized in taxes and Indian affairs. Throughout his political and professional life, Thomas P. Gore was a noted debater and public speaker. His Senate speeches were well prepared and carefully documented. In preparation for a speech, his wife or friends would read to him from books and articles pertaining to the subject on which he was to speak, from his own library of fifty thousand books or at the Library of Congress. He would then prepare his speech in private. In addition to his

other credits, Gore attended the Democratic National Conventions of 1908, 1912, 1928, and 1936 as a delegate-at-large. He traveled widely throughout the United States, sometimes alone, and always carried one or two books with him which he would ask to have read to him after he became acquainted with people. He died on March 16, 1949, in his Washington apartment, three weeks after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage. He is buried in Oklahoma City's Rose Hill Cemetery.

Thomas Pryor Gore had two children: a daughter, Nina, the mother of the prominent American author, Gore Vidal; and a son, Thomas Notley Gore, father of Albert Gore, U.S. Senator from Tennessee, 1952-1970. □

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#### RECIPE OF THE MONTH

BY  
NELL C. CARNEY

#### SOUR CREAM CORNBREAD

##### Ingredients

1 cup self-rising cornmeal	½ pint sour cream
2 Tablespoons self-rising flour	¼ cup corn oil
1 small (7- or 8-oz.) can cream-style corn	2 eggs

##### Method

Mix dry ingredients well. Add remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly. Pour into an 8"x8"x2" generously greased pan. Bake at 400 degrees for 25 minutes. Cut into squares to serve. This bread is delicious served hot with butter or covered with creamed chicken, roast beef and gravy, or sliced turkey and gravy. □

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## MONITOR MINIATURES

Convention fever is on the rise among Federationists around the country. Affiliate plans for large delegations are beginning to take shape. The delegates from Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and West Virginia are coming by chartered plane. The NFB of Maryland is coordinating the big push westward. American Airlines has provided a very good deal. There are 173 seats on the Boeing 707 and 190 people have asked for space and backed their commitments with cash. There may be two planes leaving the Baltimore-Washington International Airport on the evening of July 2, 1976, bound for Los Angeles. The price for the roundtrip is \$144.65 per seat. Other states are making plans to charter buses. Minnesota's bus is rapidly filling and so is the one from Idaho. South Carolina also has at least one bus filled. And you will remember that Iowa promised at least 250 delegates. Since these figures are as of the end of March, let those of you who have not yet made arrangements to attend this biggest and best NFB Convention be warned. Unless you want to sleep in Pershing Square Park, you had better get your reservations in now.

\* \* \* \* \*

D. Earl Fisher, immediate past president of the West Virginia Federation of the Blind, died early in February 1976. His passing is a great loss not only to the blind of West Virginia, whom he led so capably, but to all the Federation. Earl Fisher was a doer. He served for over twenty years on the board of education and had a lively interest in improving the school system for

the benefit of all children. His presence was felt on many committees and boards in that field at all levels of State and local government. Earl Fisher was the first totally blind person to graduate from the University of West Virginia. He began his insurance business while a sophomore in college and was Certified Life Underwriter. He held memberships in many organizations dealing with his business undertakings, was a well-known Lion, and an active member of the First Baptist Church in Morgantown. D. Earl Fisher was in every sense a fully participating member of his community, his State, and his country, and his belief in service to all will make his absence felt the more.

\* \* \* \* \*

Florence Grannis Shropshire sends the following happy news:

"Some of you *Braille Monitor* readers may remember that the December 1975 issue mentioned my forthcoming marriage (January 1, 1976) to the greatest guy in the world, Robert Shropshire.

"It developed that I worked through December 29 at the the Iowa Commission for the Blind. At the end of the day I—with due ceremony—presented my keys to Mr. Gerstenberger, the new head librarian, kissed him soundly on both cheeks, bid farewell to Mr. Jernigan (no one had a better boss) and boarded the Big Bird to make my way to Virginia. Accompanying me were Mrs. Nading, Braille teacher at the Iowa Commission, Mrs. Bryant, formerly on the Commission staff, my daughter, Linda

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Good, and her daughter, Nancye—from the State of Washington.

“Our wedding was a small, informal one in an Alexandria pre-Civil War church. It was a thrill to have my daughter and granddaughter play violin duets at our reception. It, also, was very gratifying to have our own NFB members, Jim and Arlene Gashel, Tom and Virginia Bickford, and Lloyd Rasmussen present, as well as Mrs. Nading, of course.

“After a glorious wedding cruise in the Caribbean where we missed the Guatemala earthquake by one day and where Bob and I both became sunburned and gained four pounds each from the delicious cooking on the luxurious French floating palace, we returned to “just living” (and starving off the gained weight) and to involvement with the NFB.

“We joined the Potomac Chapter of the NFB of Virginia and attended a library committee meeting at Virginia’s library for the blind on a snowy day. (What is snow doing in this fine southern state?)”

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Amendments to the Older Americans Act which authorize nearly \$2 billion for expanding and continuing programs to benefit the elderly over the next three years, have been signed into law by President Ford. Under the new amendments, four priority services—transportation, legal counseling, residential repair, and in-home services—will be earmarked for funding. Some of the other key benefits authorized by the amendments are: ombudsman services for nursing home residents; improvement in delivery services for rural low-income and minority elderly; and assistance

in the establishment and operation of senior ambulatory day care centers.

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Mr. A. J. Pietrolungo, 2623 Waldo Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110 reminds us that the United States Braille Chess Association (USBCA) is organizing a new correspondence chess competition. This event will be a team competition in which teams will be organized on a regional basis. For more information about this event, write to Mr. Pietrolungo. For more information about other USBCA tournaments, write to Gentautus Burba, 30 Snell Street, Brockton, Massachusetts 02401.

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The Illinois Bell Telephone Company has developed special ways to help people with hearing, sight, speech, or motion impairment save money on their phone bills. Customers ordinarily pay a higher charge if they use the services of an operator to place calls they can dial themselves. Illinois Bell will waive these charges for persons with physical impairments that make it difficult to call without an operator’s help. To exempt the handicapped from the extra charge for directory service, Illinois Bell has developed a simple certification process to determine eligibility for the lower rates. The subscriber can call his service representative in the Bell Telephone office for a certification form and instructions on how to complete it.

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The National Association of Blind Secretaries and Transcribers (NABST) has prepared a new brochure entitled “Your New Blind Secretary.” It offers suggestions

to help the employer orient his blind secretary to his office with maximum speed and minimum disruption. They are presented in question-and-answer form with explanatory emphasis. If Federationists wish to obtain copies they may do so by writing to Edward Rose, Deputy Executive Director, President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, 1111 Twentieth Street Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20036 or to NABST's new president, Mrs. Gloria Cusenza, 4135 North Monitor, Chicago, Illinois 60634.

\* \* \* \* \*

*The Month's News*, publication of the NFB of Illinois, reports as follows: "In the January 1976 issue of this newsletter, we announced the decision of the Chicago Regional Director of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) not to assert jurisdiction over the petition for election of the employees in the sheltered workshop of the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind. At the same time, we predicted that, although the employees and the NFB may have lost the battle, victory in the war was likely to be ours, and in fact, an indication that this may well be the case came to us on February 5 when the National Labor Relations Board in Washington, D.C., agreed to review the NLRB Regional Director's decision, as requested by NFB and the Communications Workers of America. It should be noted that the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind filed a resistance to NFB's appeal for a review; yet, the NLRB determined that there was, indeed, a substantial question of law involved which deserved a complete review by the Board itself. We congratulate the employees of the Chicago Lighthouse workshop! You are blazing the trail for thousands of sheltered workshop employees across the country who will

benefit from your dedication, commitment, and patience, once the NLRB has (we hope) decided in your favor. A favorable decision must come sooner or later; the only question is, will the case of the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind be the deciding one."

\* \* \* \* \*

It was a bleak November for the blind of Montana. During the Montana Association for the Blind's board meeting on November 1, we learned of the resignation of Richard Peel as Regional Librarian, effective at the end of the month. Dick served in this capacity since the Regional Library was established in the late 1960's and through his untiring efforts the library developed into one of the best in the country. Dick was a member of the MAB and a personal friend of many of the blind. He was always available for our conventions and other gatherings as needed.

On Thanksgiving morning, Emil Honka, administrator of Montana's Visual Services Division, suffered a sudden and fatal heart attack. Emil headed the services for the blind program in the State since 1964 and under his administration the program grew and flourished. Visually handicapped himself and a charter member of the MAB, he appreciated the value and importance of working cooperatively with the people his agency served. It was a good, healthful relationship that permitted frank and open discussions and certainly resulted in better services to the blind. Emil was generally present for at least a portion of most MAB board meetings and had just announced at the November 1 meeting that he had appointed our board of directors to serve as Advisory Committee to Visual Services Division. □



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